

REMARKS

Claims 1-3 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, the drawings are replaced pursuant to the attached drawing sheets, and the specification and claim 1 are amended. No new matter is added by any of these amendments.

Reconsideration based on the following remarks is respectfully requested.

I. The Drawings Satisfy All Formal Requirements

The Office Action objects to the drawings based on informalities. Figures 7 and 8 are replaced pursuant to the attached drawing sheets, to replace their legends “Related Art” with rewritten legends --Prior Art--. Withdrawal of the objection to the drawings is respectfully requested.

II. The Specification Satisfies All Formal Requirements

The Office Action objects to the specification based on informalities. The Title and the disclosure have been amended to obviate the objection. Withdrawal of the objection to the specification is respectfully requested.

III. The Claims Satisfy All Formal Requirements

The Office Action objects to claim 1 based on informalities. Claim 1 has been amended to obviate the objection. Withdrawal of the claim objection is respectfully requested.

IV. Claims 1-3 Satisfy the Requirements under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph

The Office Action rejects claims 1-3 under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, based on lack of enablement. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Subject matter to which claims 1-3 pertains is supported in the specification at paragraphs [0030], [0034] – [0042] and Figs. 1-5. For example, the specification discloses various exemplary aspects of an electrical junction box (10), shown in exploded view in Fig. 1, including an upper casing member (11), an ECU (12), a first insulation board (13), a

connector module (14), a relay module (15), a fuse module (16), a second insulation board (17) and a lower casing member (18).

The connector module (14) includes connector bus bars (20), and the fuse module (16) includes fuse bus bars (23). Exemplary aspects of the fuse bus bars (23), shown in Figs. 2 and 6, include input press contact terminals (25a, 26a) connected to a fuse terminal (30a) and output press contact terminals (27a, 28a) connected to another fuse terminal (30b), the fuse terminals (30a, 30b) being associated with a fuse (30). The fuse bus bars (23) also include welding tabs (25b, 26b, 27b, 28b) and are opposed to welding tabs (20a) of the connector module (14).

Connected and separated circuits are provided to produce a specified circuit, such as shown in Figs. 4A-4F, associating the fuse bus bars (23) and the specified circuits at their bridging portions (a, b, c, d, e). The configuration for the specified circuit being connected or separated depends on which bridging portions, shown in Fig. 3, are connected or cut.

Withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph is respectfully requested.

V. Claims 1-3 Define Patentable Subject Matter

The Office Action rejects claims 1-3 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Applicant's Admitted Prior Art (hereinafter "AAPA") or U.S. Patent 6,506,060 to Sumida *et al.* (hereinafter "Sumida"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Neither the AAPA nor Sumida teaches or suggests a junction box including a connector connection circuit and a fuse connection circuit containable in the junction box are separable from each other in order to form a connector module and a fuse module, respectively, wherein the circuits in the connector and fuse modules are connected to one another including at least one of connected circuits and separated circuits, the connector module includes stacked circuit boards, each circuit board has a first insulation board and connector bus bars secured to the first insulation board, and the fuse module includes a

second insulation board and fuse bus bars that are secured to the second insulation board and the fuse bus bars are connected to fuse terminals, each fuse terminal corresponding to a fuse, the fuse bus bars in the fuse module having press contact terminals that are connected to the fuse terminals and are disposed closely in parallel with each other, the connected circuits are connected and the separated circuits are separable to produce a specified circuit corresponding to any of all circuit specifications in different kinds of and a same kind of automobile vehicles, each the specified circuit mounts the junction box, the fuse bus bars constituting the connected circuits being integrally connected by bridging portions, and separated circuits are separable in accordance with the specified circuit specification that mounts the fuse bus bars, the specified circuit being alterable by cutting off the bridging portions, as recited in claim 1.

Instead, the AAPA and Sumida disclose a junction box 1 with connector, fuse and relay modules 2, 3, 4. In particular, the AAPA teaches the connector module 2 having bus bars 7a-1, 7a-2 being connectable to each other by bridging portions 7a-3, all at the same layer (paragraph [0005], [0011] and Figs. 7 and 8 in the AAPA, col. 5, lines 3-10, and Fig. 1 of Sumida). The AAPA configuration does not permit bridging between connections on separate layers, which complicates the circuit design. Moreover, Sumida does not disclose fuse bus bars that are connectable and separable by cutting off bridging portions in the fuse module.

Applicant asserts that the Examiner's allegation that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to implement a specified circuit using connectable and separable circuits is merely a conclusory statement, and that no support for such a statement has been provided. When relying on what is asserted to be general knowledge to negate patentability, that knowledge must be articulated and placed on the record.

Providing only conclusory statements when dealing with particular combinations of prior art in specific claims cannot support an assertion of obviousness. *In re Lee*, 61 USPQ 2d 1430, 1434-35 (Fed. Cir. 2002). Sumida discloses various internal circuits, but fails to teach or suggest the bridging portions that can be separated by cutting them off in the fuse module, as provided in Applicant's claimed features.

A *prima facie* case of obviousness for a §103 rejection requires satisfaction of three basic criteria: there must be some suggestion or motivation either in the references or knowledge generally available to modify the references or combine reference teachings, a reasonable expectation of success, and the references must teach or suggest all the claim limitations (MPEP §706.02(j)). Applicant asserts that the Office Action fails to satisfy these requirements with the AAPA and Sumida.

For at least these reasons, Applicant respectfully asserts that independent claim 1 is patentable over the applied references. The dependent claims are likewise patentable over the applied references for at least the reasons discussed, as well as for the additional features they recite. Consequently, all the claims are in condition for allowance. Thus, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103 be withdrawn.

VI. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully submits that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further is desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicant's undersigned representative at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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JAO:GWT/gwt

Attachments:

Petition for Extension of Time
Replacement Drawing Sheets: Figs 2, 3, 7 and 8

Date: January 25, 2005

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Amendments to the Drawings:

The attached sheets of drawings include changes to Figs. 7 and 8. These sheets, which include Figs 2, 3, 7 and 8, replace the original sheets including Figs. 2, 3, 7 and 8 filed with the July 8, 2004 Response to Notice to File Corrected Application Papers with Formal Drawings.

Attachment: Replacement Sheets: Figs. 2, 3, 7 and 8